

2023-J606

Senate Resolution No. 606

BY: Senator PARKER

MOURNING the death of Rowena Blackman-Stroud, beloved mother and grandmother, and distinguished citizen, and devoted member of her community

WHEREAS, There are certain outstanding members of our community who, through their selfless commitment and dedication, have served to better the quality of life in our community and have had a measurable positive impact on the lives of its residents; Rowena Blackman-Stroud was one such individual; and

WHEREAS, It is with profound sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Rowena Blackman-Stroud, noting the significance of her purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Rowena Blackman-Stroud died on Saturday, December 3, 2022, in Manhattan, New York, at the age of 72; and

WHEREAS, The eldest daughter of the late Clarence Sr. and Ruby Blackman, Rowena Blackman-Stroud was born on January 29, 1950; and

WHEREAS, While growing up in Trinidad, Rowena Blackman-Stroud attended Bishop Anstey High School; she was a member of All Saint's Church where she served as a chapel girl and played team sports in her school days; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from high school, Rowena Blackman-Stroud attended the University of the West Indies Mona in Jamaica, where she was active in the Christian student movement and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of her studies, Rowena Blackman-Stroud returned to Trinidad and became a third-generation educator, following in the footsteps of her mother and her maternal grandfather; and

WHEREAS, In the early 1970s, Rowena Blackman-Stroud migrated to Brooklyn, New York, and settled in the neighborhood of East Flatbush where she raised her son, Terrance, in the heart of the Caribbean community; and

WHEREAS, During this time, Rowena Blackman-Stroud worked at Chemical Bank in the early years of her career while also obtaining her Master's degree in Organic Chemistry at New York University; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, Rowena Blackman-Stroud joined the Nuclear Medicine team at Downstate Medical Center, where she went on to have an illustrious 43-year career, retiring in September of 2022, as the Assistant Director of Nuclear Medicine; and

WHEREAS, Upon joining Downstate Medical Center, Rowena Blackman-Stroud became active in the labor movement and served as Chapter President for United University Professions (UP) Downstate for 35 years; she was also the Statewide Treasurer of UP for 23 years, retiring from that post in 2017; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, she was an educator at both St. Mary's College and Queens Royal College, providing instruction in Chemistry,

Biology and Physics; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unwavering dedication to her community, Rowena Blackman-Stroud organized and spearheaded a union-backed fight from 2012 through 2015 to block planned retrenchments; she singlehandedly assembled the SUNY Downstate Coalition of Faith, Labor, and Community Leaders, which was instrumental in gaining legislative support, saving thousands of jobs which were in jeopardy at Downstate Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, During the COVID-19 pandemic, this extraordinary woman once again displayed her tenacity by demanding protective gear for UP members and at SUNY's public teaching hospitals in Stony Brook and Syracuse; she also pushed for and secured support for retention pay bonuses for frontline workers from UP's statewide and national affiliates, the New York State United Teachers, and the American Federation of Teachers; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, she helped secure thousands of surgical gowns, gloves, and face masks for frontline workers, achieving this during a severe nationwide PPE shortage; Rowena's profound impact on her family, friends, Downstate Medical Center, and the great State of New York is immeasurable; and

WHEREAS, Rowena Blackman-Stroud was a wonderful mother who instilled in her son a deep appreciation of her Trinidadian heritage; she truly loved her culture and returned home annually to enjoy Carnival, Calypso and Steelpan; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by her brother, Clarence Blackman, Jr., Rowena Blackman-Stroud is survived by her loving son, Terrance Blackman-Stroud; her devoted partner, Fred Lee; her two adored grandchildren, Tyler Stroud and Dalen Stroud; and her siblings, Hyacinth James and Dwight

Blackman, Sr.; as well as many nieces, nephews and extended family; and

WHEREAS, Rowena Blackman-Stroud's infinite selflessness and benevolence will shine on through her family's vivid and happy memories; her insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love, light and hope to the countless lives she touched; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Rowena Blackman-Stroud leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all who were privileged to have known and loved such an amazing woman; she will be deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Rowena Blackman-Stroud, and to express its deepest condolences to her family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Rowena Blackman-Stroud.